

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

January 15, 1974

No. 2

NEC Present: Clark, Finkel, Hildebrand, Little, Miah, Perez, Pulley,
Welch, Whicker

NC Alt. Present: Freiwirth

Chair: Pulley

Agenda: 1. Holton Correspondence

1. Holton Correspondence

Finkel reported.

Discussion

Agreed to draft replies to Comrade Holton's letters. (See attached.)

Meeting Adjourned.

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Madison, Wis.
January 10, 1974

Andrew Pulley
YSA NO
New York

Dear Comrade Pulley:

Tonight as part of carrying out my responsibilities as a member of the YSA National Committee I asked to sit in on the Madison Local Executive Committee's Tasks and Perspectives discussion. My request was rejected out of hand by a majority of the Executive Committee, all of whom are supporters of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction.

I am aware that it has long been a norm in our movement for National Committee members to sit in on such meetings. Consequently I can only consider the action of the Madison LTF supporters prohibiting me from doing so as an act of overt blind factionalism.

Such factionalism has no place in our movement and in addition to being a gross violation of our movement's norms and traditions it is not in the least conducive to removing all organizational obstacles in the path of our common attempt to resolve the political differences between the LTF and the IMT in a serious and political manner.

I am, therefore, formally protesting the factional exclusionary action of the Madison LTF supporters on the Local Executive Committee. I ask that you take steps to rectify the matter immediately.

If such steps are not forthcoming then I will have no choice but to conclude that the inclusion of IMT supporters on the YSA NC was merely a cosmetic sham designed to favorably impress the representatives of the IMT present at the convention on the eve of the World Congress.

In sum, then, I trust that you will inform me as to whether the actions of the Madison comrades confirm the impression that the YSA leadership considers the YSA IT to be disloyal, and, as such, unworthy of participation in Local Executive Committee meetings, or whether, perhaps, the action was an overzealous bit of spontaneous freelance factionalism on the part of the Madison LTF supporters.

I await your reply.

Comradely,

s/John Holton, Alternate YSA NC
Internationalist Tendency

cc: Bill Massey, IMT, United Secretariat

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P.O. Box 471 Cooper Station
New York, N.Y. 10003

January 17, 1974

John Holton
Madison

Dear Comrade Holton,

In your letter of January 10, 1974, you charge the Madison local executive committee with "blind factionalism" because of its decision to hold a closed meeting to prepare its spring tasks and perspectives report. This is nonsense. 1) No National Committee member has an automatic "right" to sit in on local executive committee meetings. 2) Any executive committee has the right to hold a closed meeting. 3) An elected member of the Madison executive committee who supports the Internationalist Tendency was present at that meeting and helped to draft the tasks and perspectives report. There is no basis whatsoever for your charges of "factionalism."

Your letter indicates that you have a misconception concerning your responsibilities as an alternate member of the National Committee. The primary responsibility of the National Committee is to lead the entire YSA in carrying out the line adopted by the convention. To facilitate this, NC members receive minutes and other materials from the National Executive Committee and copies of communications from the National Office to the locals. The NEC also welcomes communications from National Committee members as an aid in its work.

National Committee members have no special rights in their locals. Our norm is that NC members run for election to local executive committees and participate in the day-to-day activities of the YSA, just as all other members do. Participation on any leadership body means added responsibilities in carrying out the line of the YSA and not special privileges. When a NC member transfers to another local, the elected local leadership may decide to invite that comrade to participate on the executive committee until new elections are held. In other cases, the executive committee may recommend to the local that an NCer be co-opted onto the executive committee to facilitate the functioning of the leadership. This is usually the case when an NCer takes on important local responsibilities in the local. NC members, however, have no special right to sit in on any committees or fractions at their own discretion.

At the close of your letter, you ask whether the YSA leadership considers the YSA IT to be disloyal. As you know, neither the YSA Convention, the National Committee, nor the National Executive Committee made such a characterization. Every effort has been made and will continue to be made to facilitate the IT's participation in carrying out the decisions of our convention.

Your letter urges "removing all organizational obstacles in the path of our common attempt to resolve the political differences" between the majority and minority at the last convention. These political differences, however, have already been settled for the next year by our convention, and the discussion on these differences will not be reopened until our next pre-convention discussion period. They will also not be "resolved" on local executive committees. The responsibility of all members -- and, in particular, the national leadership -- is to actively carry out the decisions and campaigns adopted by our last convention.

Comradely,

s/Rich Finkel,
for the National Executive
Committee

cc: Madison organizer

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Madison, Wis.
January 14, 1974

Andrew Pulley
YSA N.O.
New York

Dear Comrade Pulley:

Once again I am compelled to inform you of the factional mania rampant among the LTF supporters in the Madison Local and ask that you take action to eliminate the blatant attempts on the part of the LTF supporters to intimidate and harass supporters of the Internationalist Tendency.

I speak specifically of the action taken at last night's Local meeting by supporters of the LTF in which they completely excluded the Internationalist Tendency from any representation on the Executive Committee even though IT supporters comprise 50% of the Local.

This sordid and undemocratic action is a travesty of Trotskyist norms. It is much more in keeping with the "norms" of bourgeois politicians and Stalinists.

Last evening, prior to Executive Committee elections, I proposed that given the almost even breakdown in the Local between LTF and IT supporters (9 LTF/8 IT) it would be appropriate that parity be established on the incoming E.C. which would consist of 3 LTF supporters and 2 IT supporters. This proposal was factionally rejected by a 9-8 vote. Elections were then held and the LTF supporters bloc voted to exclude every nominee of the IT from the E.C. I, personally, declined nomination pending receiving an answer to my letter to you of January 14 [sic] protesting my exclusion from attending E.C. meetings in my capacity as a member of the YSA N.C.

I consider last night's factionally motivated exclusion of IT supporters from the Local E.C. as part of a systematic effort on the part of the LTF supporters to demoralize IT members and drive them out of the YSA.

We will reject any such efforts and will respond to further attempts in a political manner. We will not be provoked. We will not be intimidated. We are still giving the YSA National leadership the benefit of the doubt and hope that last night's action was a bit of localized factional frenzy rather than a reflection of the National leadership's perspectives. I trust, again, that you will take steps to remedy the situation.

Comradely,

s/John Holton, Alternate YSA NC
Internationalist Tendency

cc: Bill Massey, IMT, United Secretariat

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P.O. Box 471 Cooper Station
New York, N.Y. 10003

January 23, 1974

John Holton
Madison

Dear Comrade Holton,

In a letter dated January 14, 1974, you complain that no supporters of the Internationalist Tendency were elected to the Madison local executive committee at the January 13 Madison executive committee elections. It is unlikely that this would have been the case, however, had you not declined to run for the executive committee after being nominated and motivated by a majority supporter.

In evaluating the outcome of the elections, the newly-elected Madison executive committee felt that their work would be aided by your participation in the leadership of the local. As you know, the executive committee then recommended to the local that you be co-opted onto the executive committee as a voting member, and with your agreement this was approved by the local on January 20.

Your charge of "sordid and undemocratic action" that is "in keeping with the 'norms' of bourgeois politicians and Stalinists" is a slander. There has been no "factional frenzy" on the part of the Madison majority, and there have been no attempts "to demoralize IT members and drive them out of the YSA." Supporters of the IT will continue to be given every opportunity to help carry out the decisions of the recent YSA convention.

Comradely,

s/Rich Finkel,
for the National Executive
Committee

cc: Madison organizer